

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A method for processing a previously issued negotiable instrument, the method comprising:

entering at least one negotiable instrument identifier into a terminal;

transmitting the at least one negotiable instrument identifier from the terminal to a host computer;

receiving, at the terminal, a sign from the host computer, wherein the sign indicates an authorization status of the negotiable instrument; and

automatically printing a mark on a document using a printer in communication with the terminal, wherein the mark corresponds with the sign so as to indicate the authorization status of the negotiable instrument.

2. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of automatically printing a mark on a document comprises automatically printing the sign on the document.

3. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the mark indicates that the negotiable instrument is authorized for encashment.

4. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the mark indicates that the negotiable instrument is not authorized for encashment.

5. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of automatically printing a mark on a document comprises automatically printing the mark on the negotiable instrument.

6. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of automatically printing a mark on a document comprises automatically printing an authorization number on the document.

7. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of automatically printing a mark on a document comprises automatically printing a bar code on the document.

8. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of entering at least one negotiable instrument identifier comprises entering a serial number of the negotiable instrument.

9. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of entering at least one negotiable instrument identifier comprises entering an amount of the negotiable instrument.

10. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the negotiable instrument is a money order.

11. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the negotiable instrument is a gift certificate.

12. (currently amended) A method for authorizing a previously issued negotiable instrument for encashment, the method comprising:

entering at least one negotiable instrument identifier into a terminal;
transmitting the at least one negotiable instrument identifier from the terminal to a host computer;

receiving, at the terminal, a sign from the host computer, wherein the sign indicates an encashment authorization status of the negotiable instrument;

automatically printing the sign on the negotiable instrument using a printer in communication with the terminal; and

automatically printing processing instructions on the negotiable instrument if the sign indicates that the negotiable instrument is not authorized for encashment.

13. (currently amended) A system for processing a previously issued negotiable instrument, the system comprising

a terminal for receiving at least one negotiable instrument identifier;

a host computer in communication with the terminal for receiving the at least one identifier from the terminal and for determining an encashment authorization status of the negotiable instrument, the host computer further being operative to issue a sign to the terminal that is indicative of the authorization status of the negotiable instrument; and

a printing device in communication with the terminal for automatically printing a mark on a document, wherein the mark corresponds with the sign so as to indicate the authorization status of the negotiable instrument.

14. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein the printing device is operative to print the sign on the document.

15. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein the printing device is operative to print the mark on the negotiable instrument.

16. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein the terminal further comprises an optical reader for reading the at least one negotiable instrument identifier from the negotiable instrument.

17. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein the terminal further comprises a magnetic ink reader for reading the at least one negotiable instrument identifier from the negotiable instrument.

18. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein the terminal further comprises an image scanner for scanning the negotiable instrument so as to obtain the at least one negotiable instrument identifier.

19. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein the terminal further comprises a bar code reader for reading the at least one negotiable instrument identifier from the negotiable instrument.

20. (currently amended) A system for authorizing a previously issued negotiable instrument for encashment, the system comprising:

a terminal for receiving at least one negotiable instrument identifier;

a host computer in communication with the terminal for receiving the at least one identifier from the terminal and for determining an encashment authorization status of the negotiable instrument, the host computer being operative to issue a sign to the terminal that is indicative of the authorization status of the negotiable instrument, the host computer further being operative to issue processing instructions to the terminal if the negotiable instrument is not authorized for encashment; and

a printing device in communication with the terminal for automatically printing the sign on the negotiable instrument, the printing device further being operative to automatically print the processing instructions on the negotiable instrument if the negotiable instrument is not authorized for encashment.